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6/11/37

Following is draft text protest note which Dept. considering for presentation by you to GOC Monday afternoon, March 14, or Tuesday. Do not rpt. not deliver until so instructed.

BEGIN VERBATIM TEXT

I have the honor to direct Your Excellency's attention to the speech made on March 5, 1960, by Prime Minister Castro on the occasion of the funeral for the unfortunate victims of the tragic explosion in Habana harbor on the previous day which had wrecked the French munitions ship La Coubre. I cannot, nor would I wish to conceal from Your Excellency, the sense of shock and dismay which was felt by the government and people of the United States when it was learned that the Prime Minister of Cuba in his eulogy for the innocent victims had attributed responsibility for this terrible disaster to the GUS.

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Your Excellency will recall that prior to the Prime Minister's speech I had personally conveyed my sympathy to the GOC and had offered the assistance of my government; that prior to this speech an expression of sympathy and condolence from the government and people of the United States was issued. The GUS protests the misleading insinuations which the Prime Minister directed

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GDC/MR

REVIEWED BY D. ZISCHE DATE 11/9/8

Drafted by:

RAB Stevenson/CMA/C; 3/12/60

Telegraphic transmission and

W. A. Wieland

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against the GUS in his address and deeply deplores them.

Prime Minister Castro in his speech made reference to the case of the destruction of the Maine on February 15, 1898 and indicated that the conclusion as to the cause of that disaster was ~~reached~~ "a simple supposition". The facts of this matter are that no conclusion was reached until after over a month's careful investigation and deliberation by a Naval Court of Inquiry. During the period of this investigation, the results of which were announced on March 28, 1898, the GUS urged the public to refrain from drawing unsupported and speculative conclusions.

In his address Prime Minister Castro criticized the United States policy which endeavors to reduce tensions in the Caribbean area by limiting traffic in arms and implements of war. Your Excellency will recall the representation which was made by Ambassador Bonsal to President Dorticos on October 27, 1959, describing this policy and making clear that it is not directed against the GOC but is based on the responsibility which the U.S. shares with the other members of the inter-American community to help maintain peace in the area. My government rejects Prime Minister Castro's suggestion that the ~~GUS~~ GUS wants to keep the GOC defenseless in order to oppress Cuba.

The Prime Minister on this occasion spoke of various other matters on which he expressed views highly critical of the U.S. If the GOC so desires, the GUS remains prepared to discuss these matters fully at any time through normal channels of communication between our two Governments.

With regard to Your Excellency's statement to me and to the press on March 8, the GUS for its part has never taken an aggressive and threatening tone in any

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statements, formal or informal, with regard to its relations with the GOC. In no sense of the term was the language used by the Secretary of State of the GUS in his discussion on March 7, 1960, with the ~~Charge d'Affaires~~ Charge d'Affaires of the GOC in Washington insulting to him, to the Prime Minister or to the GOC. The President of the U.S. on January 26, 1960 and the Secretary of State on March 9, 1960, made clear that the GUS continues to hope that the atmosphere of our relationship with Cuba may permit us to settle our differences through diplomatic means.

END VERBATIM TEXT

Views expressed reftel appreciated and fully considered. Should Embassy consider Castro speech March 13 requires or makes desirable changes above draft cable views NIACT.

Hunter

HERTER

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